

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BANGKO 23281 051359Z

47

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C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 23281

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MPOL, MARR, MILI, TH

SUBJECT: PRESS REPORT: U.S. ADVISERS TO STAY AFTER MARCH PULLOUT

REF: BANGKOK 23079

1. FRONTPAGE BANGKOK POST ARTICLE TODAY, APPARENTLY INSPIRED BY FOREIGN MINISTER CHATCHAI CHUNHAWAN, INDICATES HE IS PREPARING PUBLIC OPINION FOR THE SHAPE OF THE RESIDUAL PACKAGE DISCUSSED WITH HIM NOV. 3.

2. BEGIN TEXT. SEVERAL HUNDRED U.S. "ADVISERS" WILL REMAIN IN THIS COUNTRY AFTER THE SCHEDULED COMPLETE U.S. WITHDRAWAL BY MARCH NEXT YEAR APPARENTLY AS A PRE-CONDITION PUT FORTH BY THE U.S. AUTHORITIES IN EXCHANGE FOR CERTAIN SOPHISTICATED INSTALLATIONS AND EQUIPMENT REQUESTED BY THE THAI SIDE.

THE THAI AUTHORITIES REPORTEDLY HAVE NO OBJECTION TO THE PRESENCE OF THESE AMERICAN "ADVISERS" AFTER THE MARCH 1975 PULLOUT DEADLINE BUT NEGOTIATIONS ARE UNDERWAY AS TO THEIR STATUS AND UNDER WHAT CONDITIONS THEY SHOULD STAY HERE.

A HIGH-LEVEL THAI OFFICIAL TOLD THE BANGKOK POST YESTERDAY THAT IN EXCHANGE FOR THE CONTINUED PRESENCE OF THE U.S. ADVISERS AS REQUESTED BY THE AMERICANS, THE THAI SIDE HAS ASKED THE U.S. TO LEAVE BEHIND CERTAIN INSTALLATIONS AND EQUIPMENT
CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 02 BANGKO 23281 051359Z

WHILE AT THE SAME TIME ASKING THAT THAI SPECIALISTS BE

TRAINED TO TAKE OVER THE ENTIRE OPERATION IN THE FUTURE.

THIS, ACCORDING TO THE SOURCE, WAS THE MAJOR ISSUE DISCUSSED BY U.S. AMBASSADOR CHARLES WHITEHOUSE AND FOREIGN MINISTER CHATCHAI CHUNHAWAN DURING THEIR MEETING MONDAY.

THROUGH ONE OF THESE REQUESTED "ADVISORY GROUPS," THE U.S. SIDE HAD FORMALLY ASKED TO REMAIN AT THE RAMASUN RESEARCH FIELD STATION, A U.S. MILITARY LISTENING POST 20 KILOMETERS SOUTH OF UDORN THANI WHICH MONITORS NORTH VIETNAMESE AND CHINESE COMMUNICATIONS.

THE OFFICIAL DISCLOSED THAT THE REQUEST TO STAY ON AT RAMASUN WAS AGREED IN PRINCIPLE BY THE THAI SIDE BUT DETAILS AS TO THE EXACT STATUS OF THE "U.S. ADVISERS" HAVE YET TO BE WORKED OUT.

THE SOURCE SAID A MEETING WILL BE HELD IN BANGKOK NEXT WEEK TO WORK OUT THE DETAILS OF THE CONTINUED PRESENCE OF THE U.S. ADVISERS AS WELL AS OTHER ISSUES. THE MEETING WILL BE ATTENDED BY TOP ECHELONS FROM THE THAI DEFENSE AND FOREIGN MINISTRIES AS WELL AS FROM THE U.S. EMBASSY HERE.

FOREIGN MINISTER CHATCHAI, MEANWHILE, CONFIRMED THAT ALL U.S. COMBAT TROOPS WOULD BE WITHDRAWN BY MARCH 20 NEXT YEAR AND ALL U.S. AIRBASES WOULD BE TURNED OVER TO THE THAI GOVERNMENT.

HE CONFIRMED THAT U.S. ADVISORY GROUPS WILL CONTINUE TO STAY ON BUT NEGOTIATIONS WOULD BE HELD TO CUT DOWN THEIR NUMBER.

MAJ. GEN. CHATCHAI NOTED THAT THIS WOULD BE INCLUDED IN HIS TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION WITH U.S. SECRETARY OF STATE HENRY KISSINGER DURING HIS VISIT TO WASHINGTON AT THE END OF THIS MONTH CONTINUING TO EARLY NEXT MONTH.

MEANWHILE, FOREIGN MINISTRY INFORMATION DIRECTOR-GENERAL NISSAI VEJJAJIVA SAID THAT THERE ARE NOW LESS THAN 500 AMERICAN ADVISERS HERE. END TEXT.
WHITEHOUSE

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